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## OER Introduction

### **Lesson: Introduction**

#### **Lesson Components**

- Fast Fact
- Skills/Objectives
- Success Indicators
- Introduction
- Activity
- Review questions
- Resources

#### **Fast Fact**

According to [Wikipedia](#), OER is a term that was first adopted at UNESCO's 2002 Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries funded by the Hewlett Foundation. The definition OER is:

“digitized materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and self-learners to use and re-use for teaching, learning and research”

#### **Skills/Objectives**

Learners will be able to:

1. Define and describe OER.
2. List the advantages and disadvantages of OER use.

#### **Success Indicators**

1. Learner memberships in OER community websites.
2. Learner-generated posting to open forum about OER issues.

## Introduction

### Definition

Open Educational Resources (OER) are learning materials freely available in the public domain. A [definition of OER](#) from the The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation is:

"OER are teaching, learning and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use or re-purposing by others. Open educational resources include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials or techniques used to support access to knowledge."

The term OER has been used to refer to learning materials such as:

- [Learning objects](#) (quizzes, crossword puzzles, flashcards, animations, etc.)
- [Audio lectures](#)
- Audiovideo lectures
- [Images](#)
- Sounds and music
- Entire course content and [open courseware](#)
- [Collections of journal articles](#) and institutional repositories
- [Textbooks](#)

### Background

[Hewlett Foundation](#) has taken a pioneering role in the development and use of OER with its support of many initiatives: "The Open Educational Resources movement began in 2001 when the Hewlett and the Andrew W. Mellon foundations jointly funded MIT OpenCourseWare (OCW), the first institution committed to making all of its course materials freely available. Since then, more than 60 additional institutions have launched

OpenCourseWare Web sites." Just some of the many OER initiatives supported by the Hewlett Foundation include:

- [MIT Open Courseware](#)
- [Foothill-De Anza Community College District, Sharing Of Free Intellectual Assets \(Sofia\)](#)
- [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health OpenCourseWare](#)
- [Tufts University OpenCourseWare](#)
- [Utah State University OpenCourseWare](#)
- [eduCommons](#)
- [Carnegie Mellon University, Open Learning Initiative](#)
- [Monterey Institute for Technology, Online Advanced Placement courses](#)
- [Connexions](#)
- [Internet Archive, Education](#)

The Open Educational Resources movement is part of a global effort to make knowledge available to all. The UNESCO's [Virtual University Forum](#) provides an overview about definitions, initiatives, and community-building. Many repositories of open learning materials are listed at the Open [Educational Resources \(OER\) Index](#).

**Some benefits of OER include:**

- Fosters pedagogical innovation and relevance that avoids teaching from the textbook
- Broadens use of alternatives to textbooks while maintaining instructional quality
- Lowers costs of course materials for students

**Some disadvantages of OER include:**

- Quality of available OER materials inconsistent
- Materials may not meet Section 508 ADA accessibility or SCORM requirements and must be modify to bring into compliance
- No common standard for review of OER accuracy and quality
- Need to check accuracy of content
- Customization necessary to match departmental and/or college curriculum requirements

- Technical requirements to access vary
- Technological determinism created by the delivery tool

### **Case Study**

In his May 2006 article ["Bye the Book My\\_year of teaching environmental science without a textbook"](#) Eric Pallant describes how he and co-professor Terry Bensel experimented with teaching their Introduction to Environmental Science course at Allegheny College with no textbook. Instead they used a variety of open educational resources. Based on self-report, 41 of 46 students in their first-semester class read the same or more than they would have in a textbook. The experiment proved successful enough that the entire academic department has embraced the concept of OER. Faculty have distributed the work of collecting and banking websites for common use.

### **Sustainability**

Recently, several websites have become available that provide tools to support the identification, development, use, re-use, collaboration, and delivery of open learning content including searching and organization of content. Some websites, such as: [OER Commons](#), [Open Learn](#), [Open Content](#), [WikiEducator](#), [Connexions](#), [OWL Institute](#), and [OERderves](#), are devoted to nurturing online learning communities, wikis, and blogs on various aspects of OER. Also, a new journal has gone online with a focus on OER: [Eduforge: The International Journal of Open Education Resources](#).

### **Support for OER Use on Campus**

In order to promote use of OER across campus, the challenges must be identified and addressed. Results of a two-year study are presented in the article ["Why Study Users: An Environmental Scan of Use and Users of Digital Resources in the Humanities and Social Sciences Undergraduate Education."](#) Based on this study, barriers to use of digital resources including the lack of direct relevance to their preferred pedagogical approaches, and insufficient time and classroom resources. Challenges

- Resources for faculty support
- Quality assurance of learning materials
- Limited availability of fully vetted and comprehensive learning materials in some disciplines
- Articulation and transfer issues
- Printing and computer lab demands on campus by students
- Identification of collaborative tools for development, use, and delivery of OER learning materials
- Fostering use of the tools by faculty
- Compliance with federal and state accessibility requirements

### Resources Needed to Support Faculty Use and Development of OER

- Training
- Technical assistance
- Software
- Hardware
- Release time

## Activity

### Experience

1. Get connected and become a part of the OER movement community:
  - Go to [OER Commons](#). [Join](#) and sign up to receive e-news.
  - Go to [Open Learn](#). [Browse topics](#), [register](#) to become a part of the OER community, sign up for the newsletter, and [tell one friend about Open Learn](#).
  - Go to Rice University's [Connexions](#) to read the [feedback](#) from users and then register.
2. Read at least one of the following about the OER movement:
  - [Models for Sustainable Open Educational Resources](#) by [Stephen Downes](#), January 30, 2006
  - [The Current State of Open Educational Resources](#) by David Wiley, February 3, 2006

- [Open Educational Resources: Toward a New Educational Paradigm](#) by Petrides & Jimes, October 2006

## Reflect

1. Once you have [joined OER Commons](#), make your own posting to the [OER Matters Discussions](#) area. Click on OER Matters Teaching and Learning Forum to answer the following question:

"Opening up new avenues for teachers and learners to select and augment learning resources that meet one's unique teaching and learning needs is the basic mission behind OER. But how do OER impact teaching and learning and what are the issues that we need to take into consideration?"

## Apply

Now that you have a general idea of what OER is all about, you should be ready to make a couple of decisions:

1. Do you want to learn more about OER?
  - Decide which lessons you want to complete in this tutorial.
  - Decide the order in which you want to complete the lessons that makes the most sense for your learning needs.
2. Do you want to get the most out of this learning experience?
  - Invite a colleague to join you in this tutorial.
  - Complete all the exercises listed in the Activity component of each Lesson.

## Review Questions

1. What are Open Educational Resources?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages to using OER for teaching?

## Resources

- [Models for Sustainable Open Educational Resources](#)
- [The Current State of Open Educational Resources](#)
- [A Review of the Open Educational Resources \(OER\) Movement](#)
- [Open Educational Resources: Toward a New Educational Paradigm](#)
- [Open Educational Resources: Opportunities and Challenges](#)
- [Open Educational Resources Serve the World](#)
- [Giving Knowledge for Free: The Emergence of Open Educational Resources](#)
- [The Future of Free Information](#)



## Why OER?

**OER Commons** would like to welcome you to the ever-expanding community of educators and life-long learners who are using and creating content in the **open education** movement. The objective of this hands-on course is to help you quickly start using and creating **open educational resources** (OER). This module “Why OER?” is the first module in this self-paced online course “The How-tos” of OER Commons.” Here is the complete list of modules:

- [Why OER?](#)
- [Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#)
- [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)
- [My OER Portfolio](#)
- [Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)
- [OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#)
- [What is Localization?](#)
- [Students and OER](#)
- [What are Open Textbooks?](#)
- OER Case Study
- [Glossary](#)

These modules can be completed in any order; work on the ones most relevant to your needs. Consider working through this module “Why OER?” first: it provides the framework you’ll need for the other modules.

Let’s begin by making sure we are on the same page with some OER basics.

## What is OER?

Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching and learning materials that are freely available online for anyone to use, whether you are an instructor, student, or self-learner. OER can exist as smaller, stand-alone resources that can be mixed and combined to form larger pieces of content, or as larger course modules or full courses.

OER is also a process of engaging with the materials. This process involves sharing materials that you have created, either individually or in groups with other teachers and/or learners; using and adapting others' materials for your own use; and sharing back modifications to or comments about others' materials so that future users can benefit. In this course, when we use the term OER, we are talking about the process of engaging with the materials.

Here are a few examples of materials that have been submitted for anyone to use and adapt for their own use:

### [Circle of Pong](#)

From The Tech Museum of Innovation come a collection of fun design challenges which present students from grades 4 to 8 with problems that require them to apply their knowledge just like designers and engineers in the "real world." In this challenge, learners use their knowledge of potential and kinetic energy, and explore forces and motion to place a ball into the center of a 6-foot diameter circle. These informal exercises are licensed for use and reuse under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5.

### [Time Management](#)

From KQED Education Network, this lesson's aim is to develop students' understanding of the importance of managing time. It is the first lesson in the study skills series and is intended to support adult learners who are embarking on a course of study and need to acquire skills which will help them to be successful. The lessons are designed as a package with key skills reinforced in each subsequent lesson so that a study culture is developed over time. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5.

### [An Ad for an Element](#)

A lesson plan for Grades 9–12 Chemistry and Physical Science from LEARN NC. Build an understanding of the structure and properties of matter while practicing communications skills. The author comments: "My students really showed creativity. I have had every form of ad turned in

from video commercials to pamphlets to movie posters". Licensed for use and reuse under Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 2.5.

These materials, as well as thousands of others, can be found in [OER Commons](#), a comprehensive open learning network that provides the platform for facilitating the OER process.

OER is much more than a collection of resources. It is more than a thing. It is also a process that is dependent upon teachers and learners who continuously improve the resources, and share their use scenarios so that others can also benefit. It is also about collaborating to create materials.

## **Why OER?**

OER is a relatively new movement in education; educators and learners as well as learning institutions are driving its development. OER provides an alternative to the rising costs of education. For example, in some countries like South Africa, some educators and learners are tapping into OER as the only source for textbooks. OER provides an opportunity to try new ways of teaching and learning, many of which are more collaborative and participatory.

Some educators are using OER as a way to get students more involved, using the OER process as a way to collaborate with them on content creation. This process brings students into a larger context of learning and sharing knowledge beyond the four walls of their classroom.

Flexibility is a key concept in OER—materials can be adapted for your specific needs. Because these materials can be searched by a wide variety of criteria, you can quickly find what you specifically need.

## **OER is relevant, usable, adaptable, and free**

Because of the flexibility of OER materials, you can make them relevant to you and your students' needs. Why are educators and learners prompted to

search for teaching and learning materials? An [OER Commons survey](#) of over 400 teachers and learners in 2007 reveals that:

- 29% use OER **to expand knowledge or learn a new topic**
- 17% use OER **to stay current**
- 15% use OER **to get ideas for lessons or coursework**
- 11% use OER **to supplement lessons or coursework**
- 10% use OER **to improve teaching methods**
- 10% use OER **to connect with teachers or learners who have similar interests**
- 5% have **other reasons** why they use OER
- 3% use OER **to complete a class assignment.**

Discussions with teachers and learners illustrate the precise ways they are using OER materials. One educator in particular describes his experiences with OER as a way to create a much-needed textbook with his colleagues. Here's what he says:

“I guess about five years ago, being a professor, there was just a loose group of individuals who had expertise in signal processing spread over the country and we all were teaching and thinking about teaching courses. We all kind of felt like there was no common textbook that all were excited about. There just seemed to be a need like a textbook for this class. So it just seemed to be a possibility for all of us together to take notes and things that we have developed for classes and combine them into this particular way.”

And a student describes his use of OER to complement his notes and lectures:

“I just look for any concepts that I need for [my] classes that are a little shady from my notes and lectures. That's pretty much what I do now.”

**OER Commons, an evolution in learning**

OER Commons is in the forefront in providing a teaching and learning network of shared materials, from K-12 through college, from algebra to zoology, open to everyone to use and add to. We'll be using OER Commons in this course for all the hands-on activities.

As of 2007, OER Commons has nearly seventy institutional [partner collections](#) bringing over 11,000 resources to instructors and learners. And it's growing every day!

## **You, the important contributor**

The power of OER is the contribution of individual educators and learners, like you. Your contribution makes a difference worldwide in education. The following two stories illustrate how OER has touched the lives of both students and educators.

## **OER stories from around the world**

[Students](#) in New York and Barcelona collaborate on a global climate change presentation.

[An educator in Hong Kong](#) finds group exercises for her learning sciences class.

Your experience using open and freely shared course-related materials is valuable in the reuse and evolution of the materials. [Tell us your story](#); how you've used these materials and how their use has impacted how you teach or learn.

## **Activities in this Module**

The following activities have been created to help you get started with OER using OER Commons.

### **Activity: Join OER Commons**

If you don't have a free OER Commons account yet, complete the [short registration form](#). Your account will be created immediately.

### **Activity: Join the OER Commons electronic newsletter**

To receive regular updates about the exciting developments in OER Commons, subscribe to the newsletter on the [OER Commons](#) homepage. Look for the blue box on the right side of the computer screen called "Sign Up to Receive e-News!" Enter your email address and click the "Sign Up Now" button.

You can also view [archives of the newsletter](#) online.

### **Activity: Using OER materials**

In the OER Commons discussion "[How and Why of OER](#)," post your stories, suggestions, and questions with using OER in your teaching and learning. Here are some questions to consider in your post:

1. How have you used OER in your teaching and learning?
2. How have your students used OER? What were their learning outcomes?
3. What have been your challenges in using OER?
4. What impact has OER had on your institution?
5. If you had unlimited resources, how would you contribute to the OER?

If you haven't started using OER, consider these questions:

1. What challenges have you had in trying to use OER?
2. What would assist you in starting to use OER?

## Optional Activity: Facebook

If you are a Facebook member, add OER Daily to your profile to receive a new-featured item from the OER Commons site every day.

Facebook members can find the OER Daily application at:

<http://apps.facebook.com/oercdaily>

To add OER Daily to your profile, click the link "GRAB THIS APP!"

## For More Information

The following resources have been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

What is OER

- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open\\_content](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_content)
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open\\_educational\\_resources](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_educational_resources)
- [http://www.unesco.org/iiep/eng/focus/opensrc/opensrc\\_1.htm](http://www.unesco.org/iiep/eng/focus/opensrc/opensrc_1.htm)
- <http://www.hewlett.org/Programs/Education/OER/openEdResources.htm>

About OER Commons

- <http://www.oercommons.org/about>

In this module, some OER basics were presented and opportunities were provided to help you get started using OER Commons. In the next module, “[Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#),” will cover finding OER materials you can start using right now in your teaching and learning.

## OER Commons Links

For more information about OER Commons, send an email to [info@oercommons.org](mailto:info@oercommons.org).

Use [this feedback form](#) to send OER Commons general feedback, a feature request, or information about a bug/problem you had using the site.

To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

## “Quotable Quote”

For all information’s independence and extent, it is people, in their communities, organizations, and institutions, who ultimately decide what it all means and why it matters[\[footnote\]](#).

Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (2002). *The social life of information*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

## About This Module

**The "How Tos" of OER Commons** is a set of learning modules evolving out of the development of OER Commons (<http://www.oercommons.org>), a teaching and learning network for free-to-use educational materials from around the world, created and licensed by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.



## My OER Portfolio

The module “[Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)” showed how you can begin contributing to OER Commons by using tags as well as rating and reviewing materials. This module, “My OER Portfolio,” explains how the OER Portfolio can maximize your experience in using OER Commons.

### What is My OER Portfolio?

When you [register for a free account](#) at OER Commons, a portfolio and profile is automatically created. Every time you save a search, add tags, ratings, reviews, comments, or submit your own instructional materials to OER Commons, these items are stored in your portfolio. You can quickly access all these items by clicking on the My OER Portfolio link located on the top of any OER Commons page.

Having a portfolio and profile in OER Commons can stimulate collaboration among educators and learners within and across disciplines.

The advantages to using your portfolio is that it:

- personalizes your OER Commons experience
- provides quick access to your most important OER materials
- manages all your OER Commons items in one place
- provides a history of your OER Commons activity
- makes it possible to share your OER items with others

### Activity: Adding an OER saved search to your portfolio

1. Go to [OER Commons](#). You must be logged in to do this activity.
2. Locate any OER item by searching with a keyword or clicking on a tag.
3. On the results page, click the “Save This Search” button.
4. This search is now saved in your portfolio.
5. Go to your portfolio to view your saved search.

### **Activity: Saving an OER item in your portfolio**

1. Go to [OER Commons](#). You must be logged in to do this activity.
2. Locate any OER item by searching with a keyword or clicking on a tag.
3. The results page appears with a listing of materials. Click on a title.
4. Under the title click the link “Save Item.”
5. The item is now saved in your portfolio.
6. Go to your portfolio to view the saved item.

### **Activity: Saving tags, ratings, and reviews to your portfolio**

Go to the module [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#) to learn how to create tags, ratings, and reviews, which are automatically saved to your portfolio as they are created.

### **Activity: Saving notes to your portfolio**

1. Go to [OER Commons](#). You must be logged in to do this activity.
2. Locate any OER item by searching with a keyword or clicking on a tag.
3. The results page appears with a listing of materials. Click on a title.
4. Under the title click the link “My Notes.”
5. Create a note in the notes field, then click the “Save” button.
6. The note is now saved in your portfolio.
7. Go to your portfolio to view the saved note.

### **Searching your portfolio**

You can search for items that exist only in your portfolio. You must be inside your portfolio to access this search feature.

## Navigating within your portfolio

You can quickly jump to different items in your portfolio by using the navigation located in your portfolio on the left side of your screen. See Figure 1 for a visual representation of the portfolio navigation.

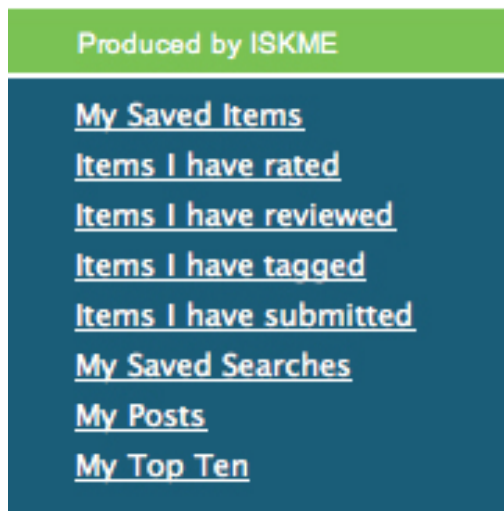


Figure 1. Visual representation of the portfolio navigation.

If you have several items in your portfolio, there may be more than one page in your portfolio. To navigate to other pages, either click on a number or the back or forward arrows. These are located in the navigation bar on top and below all the items in your portfolio. See Figure 2 for a visual representation of this navigation bar.

Brackets surrounding a number indicate the page you are on. Figure 2 shows, e.g., that you are on page 2 of your portfolio with a total number of 36 pages. Notice the small arrows on the left and right ends of the bar. Clicking on the right arrow will take you to the next page while the left arrow will take you to the preceding page.

This navigation bar is present through all of OER Commons, not just in your portfolio.

Figure 2. Visual representation of the navigation bar for browsing through pages in your portfolio.

## Shared Portfolios

When your portfolio is created, by default it is a shared portfolio. Viewing shared portfolios shows what others have in their portfolio. Shared portfolios assist in knowledge sharing; you can see how others are actively engaging with OER. The concept of sharing portfolios is the foundation of the open educational resource movement: it is one of many avenues for providing access to teaching and learning materials by exchanging content for others to use and re-use.

### Activity: Access OER Commons Shared Portfolios

1. Click on [OER Matters](#) located on the top of any OER Commons page.
2. On the left side of the screen, click on the [Shared Portfolios](#) link.

For easier access to the hundreds of portfolios, rearrange the number of results per page. If you choose “100 per page” on the drop down menu, you will have fewer pages to navigate through. Be sure to click the “Rearrange” button after you change the number of items to view per page.

## Your OER profile

After creating a free account in OER Commons, you can edit your profile. There are 2 different ways to access your profile:

1. [Log in to your account](#) at OER Commons.
2. A page confirming you have logged in appears.
3. Click on the link “Member Profile” to edit your profile.

4. Edit/update your information as needed.
5. Click the "Save" button.

On the Edit OER Member page, you can set your profile or portfolio to a private setting. Our recommendation is to keep both settings public. OER Commons' mission is to expand educational opportunities by increasing access to high-quality Open Educational Resources (OER), and facilitating the creation, use, and re-use of OER, for instructors, students, and self-learners. By keeping your portfolio public, you become a link in the chain of the OER movement.

The second way to access your profile page is to click on the "My Profile" link near the upper right corner of any OER Commons page. See Figure 3 for a visual representation.



Figure 3. Visual representation of where to find the "My Profile" link.

## Activity: Share Your Experience

In the OER Commons discussion "[How and Why of OER](#)," post your stories, suggestions, and questions with using OER in your teaching and learning. Here are a few questions to consider in your post:

1. Share 2 or 3 ways you have used your OER Portfolio in teaching or learning.
2. What kind of functionality would like to have in your portfolio?
3. How has [Shared Portfolios](#) impacted your OER experience?

## For More Information

The following resources have been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

My OER Portfolio: <http://www.oercommons.org/help/learn-more-about/my-oer-portfolio>

Shared Portfolios: <http://www.oercommons.org/matters/share>

## Other modules in this course include ...

- [Why OER?](#)
- [Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#)
- [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)
- [Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)
- [OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#)
- [What is Localization?](#)
- [Students and OER](#)
- [What are Open Textbooks?](#)
- OER Case Study
- [Glossary](#)

This module showed how the OER Portfolio can maximize your experience in OER Commons by personalizing your use and getting quick access to your most important OER materials. The next module, “[Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#),” will show how to submit your own content items or links to items about the field of open education to OER Commons.

## OER Commons Links

For more information about OER Commons, send an email to [info@oercommons.org](mailto:info@oercommons.org).

Use [this feedback form](#) to send OER Commons general feedback, a feature request, or information about a bug/problem you had using the site.

To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

## “Quotable Quote”

We store information with other people.[\[footnote\]](#)

Gladwell, M. (2002). *The Tipping Point*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

## About This Module

**The "How Tos" of OER Commons** is a set of learning modules evolving out of the development of OER Commons (<http://www.oercommons.org>), a teaching and learning network for free-to-use educational materials from around the world, created and licensed by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.

## Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials

The module “[Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#),” showed how quickly you can find OER materials. In this module, “Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials,” we’ll talk about ways you can begin contributing to OER Commons by using tags as well as rating and reviewing materials.

### The What, Why, and How of Tags

In general, **tags** classify content the way **you** want to organize it. Tags are dynamic and created by the people who use a site as opposed to being a pre-defined set of keywords created by the owners of the site. So, a tag is a keyword created by a person who uses a site. Some examples of sites that use tagging are:

- [Flickr](#), for sharing photos
- [YouTube](#) for sharing videos
- [del.icio.us](#) for sharing bookmarks
- [OER Commons](#) for sharing instructional materials.

What all these sites have in common are people sharing content in an open community setting. To keep track of their own and others’ content, users classify content of interest by using tags.

The creation of tags give users of a site the ability to participate in classifying and organizing content the way they want to. Because tags come from the people who use the site, tagging is considered a **bottom up** classification scheme as opposed to **top down** (an existing pre-defined set of keywords from the site’s administrators).

OER Commons uses a bottom up classification scheme as well as a top down one. The bottom up classification scheme (tags) enables you to create and assign keywords, making them immediately searchable. In the top down classification scheme, keywords are created and assigned by the site’s administrators (in this case, OER Commons). The benefit to bottom up is that it gives users the flexibility to create their own way to classify the



materials; top down provides a standardized set of keywords. To learn more, read [The Hive Mind: Folksonomies and User-Based Tagging](#).

Tagging items is one of the ways to become an active contributor in the open source movement, which is defined as a distributed, participatory, and collaborative environment. Why would you want to actively participate in OER Commons? With so many ways to teach and learn, your perspective lends a unique dimension to OER. Others can learn from your OER process.

When you create tags, you are sharing the way you classify items, which can be useful to others who are searching for the items.

Here's one example of how tagging can help you as an educator or learner:

One person using a lesson plan about the Spanish influenza of 1918 might assign a tag such as flu, while another might assign a tag such as pandemic. Once assigned by users, tags are tied to the given resource, and become a searchable way to find that resource as well as other resources that are tagged or associated with the same labels. These new tags provide additional context for the item and help make it more findable. Your perspectives give others a new lens into seeing the content from a different angle and in turn, may give new ideas on how to use (or re-use) it.

On the [OER Commons homepage](#), the “Top 30 Tags” are located on the right side of the page. (See Figure 1.) Clicking on any tag displays a results page with OER items tagged with that particular keyword. To view all available tags in OER Commons, click on the “View all tags” link located in the Top 30 Tags box. Viewing all tags shows the collection of all tags on a site, which is called a “**TagCloud**.” The size of the word indicates its popularity. For a visual example of OER Commons’ TagCloud, see Figure 2.



Figure 1. A visual representation of the Top 30 Tags in OER Commons. This list changes; when you view it, different tags may be shown.



Figure 2. A visual representation of OER Common's TagCloud. This list also changes as people add more tags. And as more people use a particular tag, its font size increases.

## Tags and Metadata

**Metadata** is data that provides information about other data. When you [submit your materials](#) to OER Commons, you provide information in the submission form such as the title, author name, type of material, keywords, and tags. This information becomes attached to that material. This information is called metadata. When someone conducts a search, the search engine uses the metadata to find and retrieve the material.

Additionally, when you provide information about others' materials by rating, reviewing, and tagging the material, you are providing metadata that becomes attached to that material.

The metadata you provide in your own materials as well as the information you provide by tagging, rating, and reviewing of others' materials enriches the content by giving descriptive information that assists in searching and re-use of the materials.

[Read more](#) about how OER Commons uses metadata for searching.

### Activity: Tag an OER item

1. Go to [OER Commons](#). You must be logged in to do this activity.
2. Locate any OER item by searching with a keyword or clicking on a tag.
3. After finding an OER item, click on its title. You should see a page similar to the one in Figure 3.
4. Locate "Tags for This Item" on the right side of the window. (See an example in Figure 3.) Click on "Add Tags."
5. The page "Add Tags" appears. Add your own tag or select a tag from the list below. Each tag should be on its own line.(Figure 4.)
6. When you're done, click the "Save" button.
7. Your tag(s) will then appear in "Tags for this Item."



Figure 3. A visual representation of the area where you add tags. When you tag an item, others will see the tag when they view the item.

### Add Tags to "Climate Change"

#### Your Tags

*Put each tag on its own line*

Climate Change  
Climate Change Exchange  
Greenhouse Effect  
Water Cycle

SAVE

CANCEL

#### Other Tags

*Click on tag to add it to your tags*

[2.0](#) [20th Century](#) [3d Triangle](#) [AP](#) [Adult Ed](#) [Africa](#) [Algebra](#) [America](#) [Apc](#)  
[Archaeobacteria](#) [Archaeology](#) [Archive](#) [Art](#) [Arts And Disabilities](#) [Asia](#)  
[Atmosphere](#) [Atmospheric Science](#) [Bacterial Significance](#) [Basin Landforms](#)  
[Behavior](#) [Billy the Kid](#) [Biochemistry](#) [Biology](#) [Biology Animal Classification](#)  
[Biostatistics](#) [Bird](#) [Bird Observation](#) [Black Power](#) [Books](#) [Brain Anatomy](#)  
[Calculus](#) [Carbon Cycle](#) [Case Studies](#) [Chemical & Physical Change](#) [Chemistry](#)  
[Chemosynthesis](#) [Chinese](#) [Civil Engineering](#) [Civil Society](#) [Classification of Matter](#)  
[Classroom Environment](#) [Codex](#) [Cognition](#) [Cognitive](#) [Collage](#) [Columbus](#)

Figure 4. A visual representation of an example of the “Add Tags” page.

## OER stories from around the world

[A music teacher](#) tags material she found to give it more meaningful context.

[Coming full circle](#) with the OER process: 2 chemistry teachers use the same activity.

Your experience using open and freely shared course-related materials is valuable in the reuse and evolution of the materials. [Tell us your story](#); how you've used these materials and how their use has impacted how you teach or learn.

## Rating Provides a Lens

After using an item in OER Commons, consider sharing your experience by rating it. When you rate items you have used, your rating information becomes attached to the item and provides another lens for others as they make decisions to use it.

### Activity: Rate an OER item

1. Go to [OER Commons](#). You must be logged in to do this activity.
2. Locate any OER item by searching with a keyword or clicking on a tag.
3. After finding an OER item, click on its title. You should see a page similar to the one in Figure 3.
4. Click on the link "Rate Item."
5. A drop down menu appears.
6. Rate the item by choosing a number.

Items that you rate are attached to the item as well as being placed in "My OER Portfolio." [Learn more](#) about "My OER Portfolio."

## Reviewing Provides Even More Understanding

Just as rating an OER item contributes to the richness of its information, reviewing it provides even more understanding. There are 3 categories on the Review Form:

- Use
- Overall Quality
- Usefulness and Recommendations for Future Use.

Each category asks questions that help to provide a deeper understanding of how the material can be used. Your feedback gives others ideas on how they might implement the OER item.

### **Activity: Review an OER item**

1. Go to [OER Commons](#). You must be logged in to do this activity.
2. Locate any OER item by searching with a keyword or clicking on a tag.
3. After finding an OER item, click on its title. You should see a page similar to the one in Figure 3.
4. Under the title, click on the link “Review Item.”
5. The page “Add Review” appears.
6. Review the item by completing this form as appropriate.
7. Click the “Save” button.

Your reviews are attached to the item as well as being placed in “My OER Portfolio.” [Learn more](#) about “My OER Portfolio.”

### **For More Information**

The following resources have been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

- Tagging (metadata): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tag\\_%28metadata%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tag_%28metadata%29)
- Metadata: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metadata>
- TagClouds: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tagcloud>

- Social bookmarking:  
<http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7001.pdf>

## Other modules in this course include ...

- [Why OER?](#)
- [Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#)
- [My OER Portfolio](#)
- [Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)
- [OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#)
- [What is Localization?](#)
- [Students and OER](#)
- [What are Open Textbooks?](#)
- OER Case Study
- [Glossary](#)

This module showed how you can begin contributing to OER Commons by tagging, rating, and reviewing materials you have used. The next module, “[My OER Portfolio](#),” will show how using your OER Portfolio personalizes your use of OER Commons and gives you quick access to materials you have saved.

## OER Commons Links

For more information about OER Commons, send an email to [info@oercommons.org](mailto:info@oercommons.org).

Use [this feedback form](#) to send OER Commons general feedback, a feature request, or information about a bug/problem you had using the site.

To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

## “Quotable Quote”



The form in which information is coded has, itself, an inescapable bias.

[\[footnote\]](#)

Postman, N. (1988). *Conscientious Objections*. New York: Vintage Books.

## About This Module

**The "How Tos" of OER Commons** is a set of learning modules evolving out of the development of OER Commons (<http://www.oercommons.org>), a teaching and learning network for free-to-use educational materials from around the world, created and licensed by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.



## OER Licensing and Conditions of Use

The module “[Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)” showed how to submit content items or links to items about the field of open education to OER Commons. This module, “OER Licensing and Conditions of Use,” will explain what authors need to know about licensing and conditions of use. It will also cover the licensing options in OER Commons.

### What OER Authors Need to Know About Licensing

This module is intended to offer a general overview of the basics of licensing OER materials to assist you in using others’ materials as well as sharing your own. It will not cover the legalities of every aspect of intellectual property. Specifically, this module will cover the licensing options available in OER Commons as well as the conditions of use. The objective is to provide a basic understanding of licensing to help you make an informed choice as you both use and submit content to OER Commons. Here are a few scenarios to illustrate the types of material licensing issues an educator may face:

- You have created a set of Algebra materials and exercises and want to offer them for others to use, but want to make sure you receive attribution for your work.
- You have written a story of a boy who travels to Central America with his family for your geography students, and are willing to share it with other teachers, but don’t necessarily want your name attached to it.
- You have downloaded a useful exercise for your Wednesday afternoon science lab from an OER site, but aren’t sure if you can legally change it to meet your local needs.
- You found a photograph of lemurs online, but you aren’t certain if you have permission to insert it into your PowerPoint presentation on Madagascar that you are preparing.

The philosophy of OER is based on the idea of sharing and re-using content. Because the restrictions of traditional [copyright laws](#) are not appropriate for new media and the culture that has grown around it, legal experts in the field of new media have pioneered alternative legal

frameworks for sharing, reusing, and remixing content. [Creative Commons](#) has been in the forefront of this movement; their goal is “to build a layer of reasonable, flexible copyright in the face of increasingly restrictive default rules.”

For an overview of the limitations of the traditional copyright system, and how Creative Commons addresses these limitations, watch this short video called “[Get Creative](#).”

When you submit materials to OER Commons to share with others, you be asked to choose a license for your work. During the materials submission process, you will be presented with three licensing options to choose from:

1. Creative Commons
2. GNU Free Document
3. Custom/Other

This module will provide a description of each licensing option; however, because OER Commons recommends the use of Creative Commons licensing, this module will primarily focus on Creative Commons.

## **What is Creative Commons?**

Creative Commons is a nonprofit organization that provides a free alternative to the restrictions of the traditional copyright laws. Offering several licensing options, authors have the flexibility to decide how they want others to use their materials. Watch this short video, “[Wanna Work Together?](#),” for an overview of why you would want to use Creative Commons licensing.

Using a Creative Commons license does not mean you are giving up rights to copyrighting your work. This [short overview](#) explains the four main licensing conditions and provides scenarios to illustrate how the licenses are used. To further understand Creative Commons licensing, read descriptions of the [six main licenses](#).

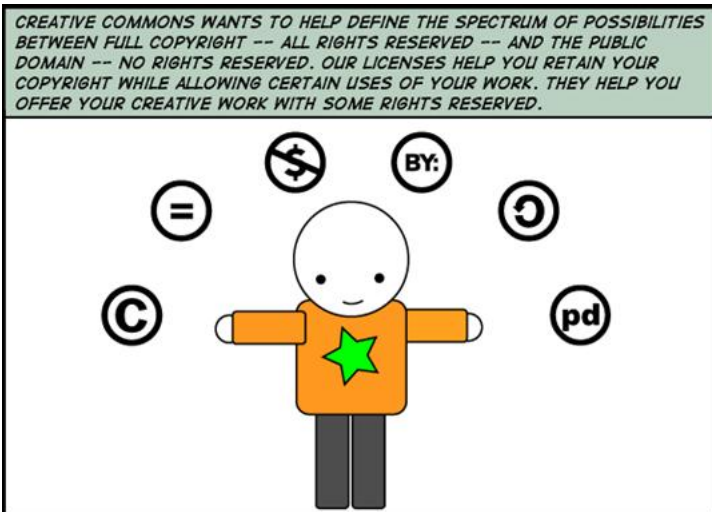


Figure 1: Creative Commons comic defining the spectrum of possibilities for copyrighting material. From: [http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Spectrumofrights\\_Comic1](http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Spectrumofrights_Comic1)

Before submitting your materials to OER Commons, and before deciding on a license, Creative Commons recommends you make sure that:


- a Creative Commons license can be applied to the type of work you want to license
- you understand how Creative Commons licenses operate
- you have the rights for the material
- you are specific about what you are licensing
- if you are a member of a collecting society, you are allowed to use a Creative Commons license.

[Read more](#) about what Creative Commons has to say about the above recommendations.

After ensuring you can use a Creative Commons license for your material, you are ready to take the next step in licensing it. During the process of submitting your material to OER Commons, you will be asked two questions to help determine which license is most appropriate for your needs. Figure 2 is a visual representation of the Creative Commons licensing form. You will see this form during the process of submitting your


material to OER Commons—it appears as a link on the OER Commons submission form.

Choose a License


  
CHOOSE A LICENSE  
provided by [Creative Commons](#)


You've made a work you're proud of. Now it's time to get creative with how you make it available.

Creative Commons licenses help you share your work while keeping your copyright. Other people can copy and distribute your work provided they [give you credit](#) — and only on the conditions you specify here. This page helps you choose those conditions. If you want to offer your work with no conditions, choose the [public domain](#).

**Allow commercial uses of your work?** ([more info](#) )

☒ Yes  
☐ No

**Allow modifications of your work?** ([more info](#) )

☒ Yes  
☐ Yes, as long as others share alike ([more info](#) )  
☐ No

[Select a License](#)

*Note:* To license a work, you must be its copyright holder or have express authorization from its copyright holder to do so.

Creative Commons does not provide legal advice or services. We provide form legal documents; the rest is up to you.

Figure 2. Visual representation of the form you will see when you complete the OER Commons submission form.

Look at [this example](#) to see how a Creative Commons license is displayed for an item in OER Commons. On this page you will see an icon that represents the chosen Creative Commons license as well as a link to the license. In this instance the author chose the [Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](#) license. Let's break down what each of these words mean:

- Attribution: You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).
- Noncommercial: You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
- Share-Alike: If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under the same or similar license to this one.
- 3.0: the version of this license.
- Unported: the license has not been adapted for a local jurisdiction.

With this particular item, the author chose a license that allows others to copy, distribute, and transmit the work as well as **remix** it, which means you can adapt the work for your own use.

If you'd like more information about Creative Commons' Version 3 license, read a [brief explanation](#) by their General Counsel.

## Using Others' Work

Before using someone else's material you found in OER Commons, check the material's licensing. This information can be found on the item's overview page in the section called "Conditions of Use." A link to the license is provided; the license will describe how the material's author has specified the way it can be used.

## Sharing Your Work

Here is a recap of how to license material you created and want to share in OER Commons using a Creative Commons' license:

1. [Determine](#) whether you can use a Creative Commons license for your work.
2. If necessary, replace or remove content that you do not have permission to use. Or get permission from the author(s) who hold the copyright.
3. Login to OER Commons and click on [OER Matters](#). This will take you to the page where the submission forms are located.
4. Complete the submission form, and decide which Creative Commons license you would like to use. The top-level choice is the most current Creative Commons license. You can choose an older license by clicking on the + icon next to “show/hide other Creative Commons licenses.”
5. After you click the “Save” button on the bottom of the submission form, the license you chose will be attached to the material you submitted.

To see the item you submitted with the license you chose, go to your [OER Portfolio](#). You'll need to be logged into OER Commons to view your portfolio. Once you are in your portfolio, click the link called “Items I have submitted.” Find the name of the item you submitted and click on its link. Look under “Conditions of Use” to see your license.

## GNU Free Document License

[GNU Free Document license](#) is another way to license your work for others to use. The GNU Free Documentation License (GNU FDL or simply GFDL) has been designed by the [Free Software Foundation](#) (FSF). The GFDL was intended for manuals, textbooks, other reference and instructional materials, and documentation for GNU and open source software. However, it can be used for any text-based work of any subject matter. For example, Wikipedia uses the GFDL for all of its text.

The GFDL license grants rights to readers and users of materials to copy, share, redistribute and modify a work. It requires all copies and derivatives to be available under the same license. Copies may also be sold commercially. There are specific requirements for modifying works involving crediting the creator of the work and for distributing large numbers of copies.

Here is [one example](#) of an item from OER Commons that uses the GNU Free Document license.

## **Custom/Other**

Custom License is used to describe the terms granted and restrictions imposed by the copyright holder for a work covered by copyright in order to provide a clear alternative to “All Rights Reserved.” It simply allows the creator of a work to state conditions for which educators and learners may view, use, share, re-distribute, or modify a work. Allowing “use for educational purposes only,” for example, grants a reader or user of a work the opportunity to use it in a classroom or for personal learning or research purposes without needing to ask permission or pay a fee. Permission to alter a work may be prohibited or not, and the conditions may be specifically described. Commercial use may also be prohibited and can specifically be stated as such.

## **Non-compatibility of Licenses**

The differing requirements and restrictions of Creative Commons (CC), GNU Free Documentation License (GFDL) and Custom-licensed or Copyrighted (All Rights Reserved) materials, make these licenses incompatible with each other. Combining content across license type is still a legal and technical obstacle for creating thoroughly remixable content.

## **OER Commons Conditions of Use**

This section is from the [OER Commons' web site](#):



OER Commons encourages the use of the [Creative Commons](#) licenses to govern the use of OER, but does not require them. Creative Commons is a framework for institutions and authors to specify limitations and freedoms around use and reuse of resources, beyond traditional copyright.

OER Commons allows Content Providers to describe custom licensing agreements that cover their resources. Many resources may inherit legacy licensing and copyright arrangements. Although we seek to point to open and reusable content, OER Commons in no way promotes the use of materials outside the particular legal restrictions imposed by a resource author or provider.

A brief introduction from Creative Commons' Choosing a License is here:

Offering OER under a Creative Commons license “does not mean giving up your copyright. It means offering some of your rights to any member of the public but only on certain conditions. What conditions? [You can find an overview of the Creative Commons licenses here.](#)”

All of the Creative Commons licenses require that a user or reuser of a resource "give attribution in the manner specified by the author or licensor."

## **OER stories from around the world**

Read [these three short stories](#) of how different people have used Creative Commons licensing for their work.

Your experience using open and freely shared course-related materials is valuable in the reuse and evolution of the materials. [Tell us your story](#); how you've used these materials and how their use has impacted how you teach or learn.

## **Activity: Share Your Experience**

At the core of OER use and re-use are legal issues surrounding the sharing, use, and re-use of OER as a way to sustain and grow the OER movement.



In the OER Commons discussion “[Intellectual Property](#),” share your thoughts about this important issue. Here are a few questions to consider in your post:

1. How does the shift from proprietary to participatory impact OER?
2. How do current licenses serve the purpose of OER?
3. What does the concept of “open” mean to you? Which attributes of “openness” are most important to you?

## For More Information

The following resource has been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

- Watch the video “[A Fair\(y\) Use Tale](#)”

Professor Eric Faden of Bucknell University provides this humorous, yet informative, review of copyright principles delivered through the words of the very folks we can thank for nearly endless copyright terms. From: <http://cyberlaw.stanford.edu/documentary-film-program/film/a-fair-y-use-tale>

## Other modules in this course include ...

- [Why OER?](#)
- [Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#)
- [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)
- [My OER Portfolio](#)
- [Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)
- [What is Localization?](#)
- [Students and OER](#)
- [What are Open Textbooks?](#)
- OER Case Study
- [Glossary](#).

This module provided an overview of what authors need to know about licensing and conditions of use. We also talked about the licensing options

in OER Commons. The next module, “[What is Localization?](#),” will provide an overview of localization—making content context-specific.

## OER Commons Links

For more information about OER Commons, send an email to [info@oercommons.org](mailto:info@oercommons.org).

Use [this feedback form](#) to send OER Commons general feedback, a feature request, or information about a bug/problem you had using the site.

To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

## “Quotable Quote”

New media break up old knowledge monopolies; indeed, create new conceptions of knowledge, even new conceptions of politics.<sup>[[footnote](#)]</sup>  
Postman, N. (1988). *Conscientious Objections*. New York: Vintage Books.

## About This Module

**The "How Tos" of OER Commons** is a set of learning modules evolving out of the development of OER Commons (<http://www.oercommons.org>), a teaching and learning network for free-to-use educational materials from around the world, created and licensed by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.

## OER Delivery, Storage, and Organization

## OER Delivery, Storage and Organization

### **Lesson Components**

- Fast Fact
- Skill/Objective
- Success Indicators
- Introduction
- Activity
- Review questions
- Resources

### **Fast Fact**

"As of January 2006, there were over 3,200 modules and over 150 courses in Connexions. Volunteers are translating modules and courses into a wide variety of different languages, including Spanish, Japanese, Italian, Chinese, Portuguese, and Thai." - [OECD](#)

### **Skills/Objectives**

Learners will be able to:

1. Course participants will use various tools as well as peer collaboration to build a Public Domain Materials Portfolio of discipline-specific public domain materials suitable for use in their own teaching.
2. Determine cost-effective printing options for students.

### **Success Indicators**

1. OER added to learner's own online collection or portfolio.
2. OER review posted by the learner.

## Introduction

Several resources are available on the Internet that provide teachers with tools to organize, deliver, and share OER for use in instruction. Some of these are: MERLOT, Connexions, and WikiEducator. Instructors can deliver OER to students in either digital or print formats. OLCOS, the UK's [Open Learning Content Observatory Services](#) project contains a 30 minute tutorial about how to [publish and share OER](#).

## OER Commons

[OER Commons](#) allows members to share portfolios. Your personalized portfolio allows you quick access to your previous use of the OER Commons. As you engage with OER content by submitting ratings and reviews, your portfolio is created automatically. If desired, you can share your portfolio with others and allow others to build on what you know. Also, you can view others' portfolios to see how people are finding, using, and interacting with OER.

## MERLOT

Read about MERLOT's [Personal Collections](#). Build and display your portfolio, as it evolves for the duration of your students' course participation, using the From the Author Snapshots.

## WikiEducator

WikiEducator provides an [Content Development Project](#) as an opportunity for instructors to contribute and share their OER.

## Connexions

Funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Connexions is part of a broader effort to use the internet for innovative delivery of educational materials. At Connexions, instructors can set up a collection of learning

materials. A course/collection contains several Connexions modules that you group together in a specific order. These modules will appear as chapters in a single document to Connexions visitors who view your course/collection.

Rice University's [Connexions](#) provides on-demand printing with QOOP Inc. that will allow students and instructors to order high-quality, hardbound textbooks from Connexions via the internet for affordable prices.

In the Connexions Community College Initiative, the top 10 community college courses, including English composition, college algebra, introduction to psychology, general chemistry, are being developed. These courses will be available for free in Connexions and in a low-cost printed form. Under this model, readers can access all books online for free, and they will pay only if they want a printed book, which they'll order online and for home delivery. Connexions also plans to develop a catalog of the 10 most-popular community college textbooks, which also will be free for online viewing and cost less than \$30 when purchased as hardbound books. Connexions plans to offer more than 100 titles for online purchase by year's end.

### Delivery of Course Materials

OER developers can distribute their learning materials via the internet using the tools and resources provided for free to educators at [WordCircle](#), [NiceNet](#), [Digication](#), or [Epsilen](#). Publishing Learning Materials Using [Print-on-DemandQOOP](#)'s print-on-demand service will allow Connexions users to order customized course guides and a variety of fully developed Connexions textbooks. Standard paperbacks will take just 3-5 days to produce and ship, and traditional hardbacks will take about a week to produce. QOOP ships directly to customers.

Lulu lets you publish and sell and print on demand books, e-books, online music, images, custom calendars safari Take a [tour of Lulu](#) to find out how to publish using their services. Lulu makes 20% of total cost of the textbook you publish using their services. [SafariU](#) allows faculty to create, publish and share customized computer science and information technology course materials. SafariU was developed by O'Reilly Media in conjunction with

substantial feedback from educators and trainers. SafariU allows members to select chapters or sections from O'Reilly books and articles to include in custom print books and online learning resources that students can access directly. Other print-on-demand services include [Illumina](#) and [exlibris](#)

## Activity

## Experience

## OER Commons

1. If you haven't already done so, join OER Commons. Go to the [OER Commons](#) website, then click on Join Now.
2. Click on Start My OER Portfolio.
3. Visit [Shared Portfolios](#) posted to the OER Commons website to see to see how others search, use, and interact with OER.

## MERLOT

1. View the [Gallery of Sample MERLOT From the Author Snapshots](#) then find out how to [create your own Author Snapshot](#) using the [KEEP Toolkit](#).
2. Go to the MERLOT website.
  - View a few Personal Collections posted by others.
  - Create your own MERLOT [Personal Collection](#)

## Connexions

1. Create a [Course/Collection](#) at the Connexions website.

## Reflect

Post your response to the following to your course Discussion area:

1. What is the best way for you to disseminate OER to your students?
2. Do you want to share your OER for public use and repurposing? Why or why not?

## Apply

1. [Create a module](#) to share at Connexions.
2. Determine the cost to your students to purchase OER for your course using [Lulu](#).

## Review Questions

1. What are some of the print-on-demand services for disseminating OER?
2. What tools and features are available to deliver OER?

## Resources

- [Case Study: Promoting Use of MERLOT Learning Objects by Sharing Authors' and Users' Pedagogical Knowledge](#)
- [Open Educational Practices and Resources. OLCOS Roadmap 2012](#)
- [What Makes an Open Education Program Sustainable: The Case of Connexions](#)

## OER Identifying Sources

### **OER Tools to Identify and Select**

#### **Lesson Components**

- Fast Fact
- Skill/Objective
- Success Indicators
- Introduction
- Activity
- Review questions
- Resources

#### **Fast Fact**

Open Educational Resources (OER) are “digitized materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and self-learners to use and re-use for teaching, learning and research.” Term first adopted at UNESCO’s 2002 Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries funded by the Hewlett Foundation. - from [Wikipedia](#)

#### **Skills/Objectives**

Learners will be able to:

1. Identify resources for use of primary sources as learning materials in their own teaching disciplines.
2. Locate at least one primary source for use in teaching.
3. Develop a lesson plan using primary sources.

#### **Success Indicators**



1. OER added to learner's own online collection or portfolio.
2. OER review posted by the learner.
3. Posted lesson plan that uses at least one primary source as an OER for their own teaching.

## **Introduction**

Several resources are available on the Internet that provide teachers with tools to identify and select OER for use in instruction. Some of these are: [OER Commons](#), [MERLOT](#), [Connexions](#), [FREE: Federal Resources for Educational Excellence](#), [COL Knowledge Finder](#), and [Creative Commons](#).

## **OER Commons**

OER Commons is one of several Internet resources where you can identify and select OER. With a free membership, you can add tags, ratings, reviews, comments, and favorites to your own portfolio. You can post to discussion, blog, and wiki areas, and see how others are using OER.

OER Commons is created and produced by ISKME, the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education. It is generously supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and represents dozens of collaborations with OER partners and communities across the globe.

## **MERLOT**

MERLOT is a pioneer in the development of searchable and shareable online learning materials for higher education. The site provides [collection](#) of [peer reviewed](#) learning materials created by registered members. MERLOT provides criteria for peer-review of learning materials submitted.

Take a [Tour of the new Merlot](#). Searches in MERLOT can be sorted by date, reviews ratings, title, author, and material type. A tutorial about how

to search for learning materials using MERLOT is available from the SUNY Teaching, Learning, and Technology Program.

## **Connexions**

[Connexions](#) has a repository of OER that are searchable by subject, language, popularity, title, keyword, and author. The repository contains 3925 reusable modules woven into 211 collections. The content in Connexions comes in two formats: modules, which are like small "knowledge chunks," and courses, which are collections of modules. The Connexions Creative Commons [open license](#) allows for free use and reuse of all its content.

## **FREE**

[FREE: Federal Resources for Educational Excellence](#) provides links to hundreds of education resources from or supported by the U.S. government.

## **OER Repositories**

WikiEducator provides several tools for identification and use of OER including the [Exemplary Collection of Open eLearning Content Repositories](#). [Lola Exchange](#) provides learning objects and learning activities available for searching by topic, title, discipline, or author. Disciplines listed are Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Sciences, Business, Arts, Education, and Humanities. All materials are reviewed according to standard criteria by volunteers. [Curiki](#) is a global education and learning community dedicated to providing quality learning materials worldwide. Learning materials can be searched by the following topics: Arts, Educational Technology, Foreign Languages, Health, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Vocational Education. A re-launch of the site is planned soon to add the following new features:

- Access information, tools, and resources from the new [member home page](#).
- View and comment on other members' [learning resources](#).
- Edit and collaborate on learning materials, and build collections and resources with [Curikulum Builder](#).
- Develop content in the Curikulum Builder with [templates](#).

- Manage your own contributions and collections, as well as your user profile and blog, using your personalized space in [MyCurriki](#).

## **COL Knowledge Finder**

[COL Knowledge Finder](#) is a service that searches reliable sources of information in open and distance learning and provides organization tools. Emphasis is on international development goals like poverty alleviation, health and education for all. The COL Knowledge Finder service is provided by The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) which is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies. To use the search tool, click on "Search". Then follow the guidelines on the screen. More details are available from the [Orientation](#). [Training videos](#) for effective searching and use of the COL Knowledge Finder tools are available.

## **Creative Commons**

[Creative Commons](#) provides a way to find shareable photos, music, text, books, and other educational material utilizing Creative Commons enabled search services at Google, Yahoo!, Flickr, blip.tv, Owlmusic, and SpinXpress. A [Content Curators](#) wiki area is available that provides a list of curators of Creative Commons-licensed content. Users are invited to contribute to and edit this list themselves.

## **Edu2.0**

Take a [tour](#) of [Edu2.0](#) to discover all browsable shared course content organized by topic. Resources include quizzes, webquests, presentations, projects, experiments, courses, classes, curricula, audio, video, powerpoint, excel and other kinds of attachments.

## **Activity**

## **Experience**

1. Review the [criteria](#) available from MERLOT's Peer Review process.
2. Go to [OER Commons](#), [MERLOT](#), [Connexions](#), and [FREE](#) to search for content in your teaching discipline.
3. View the CNBC [video interview](#) with Scott McNealy about Curriki.
4. Visit the [OWL Institute Portal](#) to search for resources, people and communities; browse courses and home pages or create your own.

## Reflect

1. Participate in the latest [OER Commons Survey](#) and check the results.
2. Visit the [OER Matters Discussions](#) to read and post comments about the How and Why of OER:

"Share your thoughts, experiences and expertise on the OER movement, its challenges and potential impact. Why does OER matter, how does it work, and what are the possibilities for the future of use and re-use of open education content?"

## Apply

1. Review learning materials at [OER Commons](#). Type keywords in the [Search](#) box in the upper right corner of the screen to identify at least one OER to review.
  - Click on Save this Search.
  - Sort by Rating. Click on the title of the OER you want to review, then click on View Item.
  - Click on Rate Item to give it your rating.
  - Click on Review Item to submit your review.
2. Submit your review of some learning materials at [MERLOT](#). You will need to [become a member](#) before you can submit your review.
3. If you know of a good source of open educational resources, submit the Internet address for inclusion on the COL Knowledge Finder [submit-a-site page](#).

## Review Questions

1. What are some of the repositories where OER can be located and reviewed?
2. What tools and features are available to identify and select OER?

## Resources

- [Exemplary Collection of Open eLearning Content Repositories](#)
- [Searching for Public Domain Materials on the Web](#)
- [Open Educational Practices and Resources. OLCOS Roadmap 2012](#)

## OER Open Courseware

## OER Open Courseware

### Lesson Components

- Fast Fact
- Skill/Objective
- Success Indicators
- Introduction
- Activity
- Review questions
- Resources

### Fast Fact

[MIT](#) first announced its Open Courseware program in 2001. The OCW provides open access to course materials for up to 1,550 MIT courses, representing 34 departments and all five MIT schools. The goal is to include materials from all MIT courses by 2008.

### Skills/Objectives

Learners will be able to:

1. Identify sources of open courseware for use in their own teaching disciplines.
2. Locate at lesson in an open course to modify for use in their own teaching.

### Success Indicators

1. Posted lesson plan that repurposes learning content from OCW for learner's own teaching.

## Introduction

The OpenCourseWare movement began at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 2002 and has now spread to some 120 other universities worldwide. According to [UC Irvine](#): "OpenCourseWare (OCW) is a free and open digital publication of high quality university-level educational materials, often including syllabi, lecture notes, assignments and exams. Open educational resources are based on the notion that knowledge and education are common goods that must be supported by a defined community."

While OCW initiatives typically do not provide a degree, credit, certification, or access to instructors, the materials are made available, for free, under open licenses for use and adaption by educators and learners anywhere.

## Definition

According to the [Open Courseware Consortium](#):

"An OpenCourseWare site is a free and open digital publication of high quality educational materials, organized as courses...is available for use and adaptation under an open license...does not typically provide certification or access to instructors."

The [OpenCourseWare Finder Finder](#) currently shows search results from:

- [MIT OCW](#)
- [Utah State University OCW](#)
- [Johns Hopkins School of Public Health OCW](#)
- [Tufts University OCW](#)
- [Foothill De-Anza SOFIA](#)
- [Carnegie Mellon Open Learning Initiative](#)

Other universities with open courseware include:

- [University of California, Irvine](#)
- [University of Notre Dame](#)
- [University of Washington Computer Science & Engineering](#)
- [Stanford on iTunes](#)
- [Penn State](#)

[Wikiversity](#) is a online group of educators engaged in a collaborative learning effort using wiki software, which makes collaboration easy. Take the [guided tour](#) to discover more.

[HippoCampus](#), a project of the Monterey Institute for Technology and Education (MITE), provides high-quality, multimedia content on general education subjects to high school and college students free of charge.

## Activity

### Experience

1. Use the [OpenCourseWare Finder Finder](#) to search for Open Courseware in your teaching discipline.
2. Listen to a lecture podcast at [Stanford on iTunes](#) or Berkeley.

### Reflect

1. Participate in the [Wikiversity Motto contest](#) by posting your choice and why on the wiki or at the [\[link\]Wikiversity Colloquium](#).

### Apply

1. Develop a lesson plan that repurposes learning content from OCW for your own teaching.
2. Consider adding your own course to [Wikiuniversity](#). Use the [tutorial](#) provided.

## Review Questions



1. What are some of the sources of open courseware?
2. Which sources of open courseware provide learning materials that can be modified for use in the learner's own teaching?

## **Resources**

- [How the Open Source Movement Has Changed Education: 10 Success Stories](#)
- [The Promise of Open Educational Resources](#)

## OER Use of Primary Sources

### **OER Use of Primary Sources**

#### Lesson Components

- Fast Fact
- Skill/Objective
- Success Indicators
- Introduction
- Activity
- Review questions
- Resources

#### **Fast Fact**

The Library of Congress is the nation's oldest federal cultural institution and serves as the research arm of Congress. It is also the largest library in the world, with nearly 130 million items on approximately 530 miles of bookshelves. The collections include: books and other printed materials, sound and motion picture recordings, photographs, maps, and manuscripts. Reference: [Office of the Librarian](#)

#### **Skills/Objectives**

Learners will be able to:

1. Identify resources for use of primary sources as learning materials in their own teaching disciplines.
2. Locate at least one primary source for use in their own teaching.
3. Develop a lesson plan using primary sources.

#### **Success Indicators**

1. Learner will post a lesson plan that uses at least one primary source as an OER for their own teaching.

## Introduction

According to the [National Archives](#), the use of primary documents as learning materials promotes

1. Student awareness that all written history is subjective in the sense that it reflects an author's interpretation of past events, and
2. Important analytical skills.

Primary sources include:

- personal records (birth certificates, death certificates, passports, driver's licenses)
- federal census figures
- newspapers
- local government files
- letters, personal diaries and memoirs
- drawings and photographs
- oral histories
- artifacts
- court transcripts

Complete the [Introductory Lesson](#) about primary sources available from the American Memory project at the Library of Congress.

The [Smithsonian Source Teaching with Primary Sources](#) is another useful resource for teaching American History. It includes videos, lesson plans, and searchable collection of primary documents.

[American Rhetoric](#) makes audio clips of various speeches available from a Speech Bank via the internet. Website content at [American Rhetoric](#) is free for educational uses under the Fair Use exception with attribution.

## Activity

## Experience

Complete at least two of the following activities:

1. Review one of the lesson plans posted at the [National Archive's Teaching With Documents: Lesson Plans](#) and look at the Analysis Worksheets.
2. [Create an account](#) at the Smithsonian Source Teaching with Primary Sources so that you can review lessons and add them to your own collection. Click on [Historical Perspectives](#) to find a topic of interest to you and find DBQ to add to your collection.
3. [Create an account](#) and login to the Primary Source so that you can set up a Portfolio for storing primary documents that you have identified and selected for use. [Contribute](#) a Library of Congress resource link for your subject area. Search the [Learning Experiences Collection](#), select a Learning Experience of interest, and review it.
4. Create an introductory activity for your own students following the instructions posted at [Primary Source Learning](#).

## Reflect

Post your responses to the following questions in your course Discussion area:

- How would the learning experience be different for a student completing a lesson that uses primary sources versus the same lesson that uses a textbook?
- What challenges might you encounter as a teacher using primary sources instead of textbooks?

## Apply

1. Identify a set of primary sources for use in your teaching.
2. Develop a lesson plan using these primary sources. Post your lesson plan to [MERLOT](#) or [OER Commons](#).

## Review Questions

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages to using primary sources for teaching?
2. What are the most useful resources for teaching with primary sources in your discipline and why?

## Resources

- [Primary Source Learning Handbook](#)
- [Use of Primary Sources in Library of Congress](#)
- [National Archives Lesson Plans](#)
- [Library of Congress](#)
- [Primary Source Learning](#)
- [Using digitized primary source materials in the classroom](#)

## OER Fair Use, Copyright, and TEACH Act

### **Lesson: Fair Use and Copyright**

#### **Lesson Components**

- Fast Fact
- Skill/Objective
- Success Indicators
- Introduction
- Activity
- Review questions
- Resources

#### **Fast Fact**

The copyright notice © is no longer required for works published after March 1989. Absence of notice does not necessarily mean the work is within the public domain.

#### **Skills/Objectives**

Learners will be able to:

1. Define copyright, fair use, the TEACH Act, and intellectual property.

#### **Success Indicators**

Determine the appropriateness of their own use learning materials for OER in terms of fair use. Creative Commons license selected for learner's OER.

#### **Introduction**

A basic understanding of copyright, fair use, the TEACH Act, and intellectual property is necessary before using and developing OER in order to minimize the risk of violating the law. You are encouraged to visit one or more of the many online tutorials exist which address these topics.

## Copyright

- [Copyright and Distance Education](#)
- [© Primer](#), University of Maryland
- [Digital©Primer](#) focuses specifically on issues relating to copyright in digital works and the problems encountered by educational institutions in their use of digital materials for teaching, research and service
- [The Case of Dr. No](#) is a video clip that addresses the challenges faced by faculty when distributing copyrighted material from various sources.
- [The Copyright Crash Course](#) from the University of Texas at Austin
- [Copyright Term and the Public Domain in the United States](#)
- [Copyright Management Center at IUPUI](#)
- [VA Tech Copyright Info](#)
- [Copyright Tutorial](#)

## Fair Use

The fair use doctrine, as codified in §17 U.S.C. 107, sets forth four general factors to be considered when evaluating whether a proposed use of a copyrighted work is a fair use and thus, does not require permission from the copyright holder.

The four factors are:

1. What is the purpose of the proposed use?
  2. What is the nature of the copyright work to be used?
  3. How much of the copyrighted work will be used?
  4. What is the effect on the market or potential market for the copyrighted work?
- [Fair Use](#)

- [Common Scenarios of Fair Use Issues: Posting Materials on Course Management Systems](#)
- [Library of Congress Questions and Answers: Copyright and Fair Use](#)
- [Copyright & Fair Use at Stanford](#)
- [Rules of Thumb for Displaying and Performing Others' Works in Distance Learning](#)
- [A Teacher's Guide to Fair Use and Copyright](#)
- [Copyright and Fair Use in the Classroom, on the Internet, and the World Wide Web](#)
- [Stanford Copyright Law and Fair Use](#)

## **TEACH Act**

The TEACH Act is updates copyright law for digital online education as a compromise effort to address the copyright restriction disparities between digital classroom and the traditional classroom in terms of performances and displays. [TEACH Toolkit](#) provides checklists and a “best practices” as well as basic information. Under the Teach Act, faculty can use copyrighted material in their online courses without seeking the author's permission under the following circumstances:

- The college must be accredited and nonprofit.
- The college must have an internal policy on use of copyrighted material and on copyright law.
- The college must provide printed or online resources for faculty members that describe their rights and responsibilities under copyright law.
- The material must not have been originally intended for educational use.
- The material must have been lawfully acquired
- The material must be an integral part of the class session.
- Reasonable precautions must be made to restrict access to the copyrighted content to students enrolled in the course.
- Other reasonable controls must be used to prevent students from disseminating the material after viewing it.
- If a digital version of the material is readily available for use at the institution, then the instructor cannot convert an analog version to



digital form for use in an online course.

- The college must inform students that the material may be protected by copyright law.

## Intellectual Property

Watch the [video introduction](#) to [Creative Commons \(CC\)](#). CC is a nonprofit organization that provides authors with (free tools to manage their intellectual property. A CC license allows others to reproduce a licensed work when they give credit to the license holder. The CC website has a tool that generates [licenses](#) (in HTML format) based on chosen criteria. Educause provides good summary of [7 Things Series You Should Know About Creative Commons](#)

## Activity

### Experience

1. Watch [Dr. No Returns!](#) is a video clip in which an instructor would like to use the TEACH Act to provide music from various sources to a "History of Music" course through a password protected web site.
2. Use [Checklist for the TEACH Act](#) to determine whether or not your planned use of learning materials are suitable as OER is in compliance with the TEACH Act.
3. Use one of the [EduSource Canada Public Domain Wizard](#) to determine if the learning materials you plan to use are in the public domain.
4. Use [Checklist for Fair Use](#) to determine whether or not your planned use of learning materials are suitable as OER in terms of fair use.

### Reflect

1. Once you have [joined OER Commons](#), make your own posting to the [OER Matters Discussions](#) area. Click on OER Matters Intellectual Property Forum to answer the following question:

"At the core of OER use and re-use are legal issues surrounding the sharing, use, and re-use of OER as a way to sustain and grow the OER movement. How does the shift from proprietary to participatory impact OER?"

## Apply

1. [Choose an OER License](#) for learning materials you might develop and share.
2. Read about how [intellectual property and fair use](#) impact decisions to publish scholarly works at [Connexions](#). Decide if you want to [contribute](#) to Connexions.

## Review Questions

1. What is fair use?
2. What is the TEACH Act?
3. How do fair use and the TEACH Act apply to the use of OER in your teaching?

## Resources

- [The Copyright Crash Course” from the University of Texas at Austin](#)
- [New Copyright Law for Distance Education: The Meaning and Importance of the TEACH Act](#)
- [Balancing copyright concerns: The TEACH Act of 2001](#)

## OER Public Domain Textbook Sources

### **OER Sources of Public Domain Textbooks**

#### **Lesson Components**

- Fast Fact
- Skills/Objectives
- Success Indicators
- Introduction
- Activity
- Review questions
- Resources

#### **Fast Fact**

**Project Gutenberg has 20,000 free books in its Online Book Catalog and is the oldest producer of free ebooks on the Internet.**

#### **Skills/Objectives**

Learners will be able to:

- Locate sources of public domain textbooks.
- Establish criteria for selection of public domain textbooks.

#### **Success Indicators**

- Lesson plan developed that incorporates use of a public domain textbook.

## Introduction

Faculty often find the task of selecting reading materials or textbooks for a course daunting. Instructors can ease the selection process by establishing and following criteria such as quantity, quality, accuracy, currency, reading level, relevance, and reliability. Whether due to passion for the course topic or simply hasty decision-making, some instructors make the mistake of selecting and assigning an overwhelming amount of reading for their students. Try estimating how many minutes students will need to complete each reading assignment and adjust your selection of learning materials accordingly. Another concern is that information provided to students, especially in printed textbooks, can quickly become outdated.

### Criteria/Guidelines for Selection of Materials

- Quality of content, literary merit and format
- Timeliness
- Favorable reviews
- Permanence/lasting value
- Authority: author
- Scope
- Physical quality
- Format: print, CD-ROM, online, etc.
- reading level

Two major efforts to promote the development and sharing of public domain textbooks are [Connexions](#) and [Wikibooks](#). [Free Textbook Search](#) allows users to search for free textbooks in 113 sites in English, German, French, Dutch or Swedish.

[Connexions](#) is a project at Rice University supported by the Hewlett Foundation to promote collaborative development, free sharing, and rapid publishing of scholarly content on the Web. Content is organized in small modules that are easily connected into larger courses. All content is free to use and reuse under the Creative Commons "attribution" license.

[Wikibooks](#) is a Wikimedia project started in 2003 with the mission to create a free collection of open-content textbooks that anyone can edit.

Collections of books that are freely available include [Project Gutenberg](#), [Read Print](#), [Bartleby](#), [Online Books](#), [Electronic Text Service](#), and the [Open Book Project](#).

Project Gutenberg has 20,000 free books in its Online Book Catalog and is the oldest producer of free ebooks on the Internet. The mission of [Project Gutenberg](#) is to encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. In an effort to promote intercultural understanding, the [World Digital Library](#) plans to make available significant primary materials from cultures around the world, including manuscripts, maps, rare books, musical scores, recordings, films, prints, photographs, architectural drawings, and other significant cultural materials.

[The Assayer](#) displays a list of textbooks that are freely available in many disciplines. For an example, see these [introductory physics textbooks](#) and [Liberte](#), a first-year collegel French textbook. The [Internet Public Library](#) provides a comprehensive list of books that are available on the internet. A [video tour](#) of the site is available. Examples of free available eBooks from [Bartleby](#):

- [The Harvard Classics Shelf of Fiction](#)
- [The Oxford Shakespeare](#)
- [Anatomy of the Human Body](#)
- [The World Factbook, 2003](#)
- [Online Sapiens](#)

Two sources of audio books in the public domain are [LibriVox](#) and [Loudlit](#). [LibriVox](#) provides free audiobooks from the public domain with several options for listening. [Loudlit](#) provides a text of great literary masterpieces as well as high quality audio to help readers improve their spelling, punctuation and paragraph structure. Loudlit literature includes children's stories, poetry, short stories, and novels.

Other sources of textbook learning materials are digital collections of [institutional repositories](#) at universities and [self-archiving](#) by authors on the internet. Some of these include:

- [Scholarship of the California Digital Library](#)

- [MIT textbooks](#)
- [Hofstra University Hofprints-Hofstra University E-Print Archive](#)
- [Cornell Race, Ethnicity, and Religion Project](#)

## Activity

### Experience

1. Identify some learning materials at [Project Gutenberg](#).
2. [Go to Wikibooks](#) to identify textbooks in your teaching discipline.
3. Consider using Wikibooks for a [class project](#); read the guidelines.
4. Take a [tour](#) of Connexions to find out if it has resources of use to you in your teaching.

### Reflect

1. [Create an account](#) at Project Gutenberg then post your own review of a textbook.

### Apply

1. [Distributed Proofreaders](#). Help create an eBook.
2. [Contribute](#) to Wikibooks by editing pages, creating new pages, publicizing Wikibooks, and many other ways, such as donating.

### Review Questions

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages to using public domain textbooks for teaching?
2. What are the most useful sources of public domain textbooks in your discipline and why?

### Resources

- [Project Gutenberg](#)
- [The 7 Things You Should Know About E-Books](#)

## OER Glossary

The following terms have been used in the course “[The How-Tos of OER Commons](#).”

**Bottom up:** an informational classification scheme that emerges from a grassroots level. In OER, tags are a bottom up way to classify data. The opposite of top down.

**Licensing:** The process of choosing and assigning a license to an open educational resource by the original creator of that resource. OER creators can choose from several licenses offered by organizations such as Creative Commons—with the license typically stipulating the conditions under which that resource can be used, shared, adapted, or distributed by other users.

**Localization:** The process through which educational resources are adapted to meet local teaching and learning needs. Resource localization might entail, e.g., translating a lesson plan into another language, removing parts of a course module that are too complex for a given set of students.

**Metadata:** Basic descriptive data about an educational resource, which help users more easily find and use the resource. It is “data about data,” or attributes that describe the data, and includes descriptors such as title, language, author, and grade level, creation date, etc.

**OER Commons:** OER that can be accessed through OER Commons are created, housed, and maintained through institutions, collections, and authors that partner with OER Commons to share their data.

**Open Educational Resources (OER):** Teaching and learning materials that are freely available online for everyone to use, whether you are an instructor, student, or self-learner. Examples of OER include: full courses, course modules, syllabi, lectures, homework assignments, quizzes, lab and classroom activities, pedagogical materials, games, simulations, and many more resources contained in digital media collections from around the world.



**Open textbook:** Digitized textbooks freely available with nonrestrictive licenses.

**Parent materials:** Materials that belong to other people that you used in creating your own.

**Parent URL:** The web address where the parent materials are located.

**Peer production:** The process of online, collaborative content creation by peers, most often facilitated through an authoring platform or wiki. The project Free High School Science Texts, which draws on online volunteers and a collaborative authoring platform to create free-to-use textbooks for South African schools, is one example of the peer production process.

**Remix:** adapting the work for your own use.

**Reuse:** The adaptation, remixing or modification of OER for new and/or local purposes.

**TagCloud:** A set of tags associated with a resource or a set of resources, which are displayed in a cluster next to the resource(s). The size of the fonts that represent the tags in the cloud provides an indication of how common each tag is: Common tags that occur frequently across a set of resources are typically displayed in large, bold font, while less common tags are displayed in a smaller font.

**Tags:** Tags are a bottom up, user-generated classification system for educational resources, and frequently serve as an alternative or addition to a top down, expert-created classification system. Tags are words assigned to resources by the users of those resources. For example, one user of a lesson plan about the Spanish influenza of 1918 might assign a tag such as flu, while another might assign a tag such as pandemic. Once assigned by users, tags are tied to the given resource, and become a searchable way to find that resource as well as other resources that are tagged or associated with the same labels.

**Top down:** an informational classification scheme that is created by a site's administrator. In OER, keywords are a top down way to classify data. The

opposite of bottom up.

**URL pointer:** The web address where your shared materials are stored.

## About This Module

**The "How Tos" of OER Commons** is a set of learning modules evolving out of the development of OER Commons (<http://www.oercommons.org>), a teaching and learning network for free-to-use educational materials from around the world, created and licensed by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.

## Submitting Materials to OER Commons

The module “[My OER Portfolio](#)” showed how the OER Portfolio can maximize your experience using OER Commons. This module, “Submitting Materials to OER Commons,” explains how to submit your own content items or links to items about the field of open education to OER Commons.

## Submitting Your Materials to OER Commons

The module “[Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing](#)” showed how you can contribute to the community of OER Commons members by giving feedback to pre-existing OER. When you create new tags, or rate and review materials you have used, others benefit from the ideas you bring to the OER item. Your perspectives shed light into new ways of using the OER.

This module takes contribution to a new level of participation: by submitting your own educational materials. The type of materials you submit can vary—from a class syllabus, activities, or assessment to news articles, conference information, and wikis. What all these resource items have in common are that they support teaching and learning. In this module I’ll be showing a few examples to give you an idea of the wide range of materials available in OER Commons.

To get your materials into OER Commons, you’ll use a submission form. The names of the four OER Commons submission forms are listed below; these forms also identify the content categories you can submit to OER Commons:

1. Submit your Course Materials (e.g., course-related educational materials)
2. Submit Your Library or Collection (e.g., resources from digital media collections and libraries of digitized primary sources)
3. Submit OER Matters (e.g., resources about the emerging field of open content and open educational resources)

4. Recommend new OER materials (e.g., any OER providers and materials).

[OER Matters](#) is where the process of submitting materials begins for each of the four submission forms mentioned above. Each form follows a similar process. In this module, I will give a description for the first form “Submit your Course Materials.” For the other forms, I will describe what is different.

### **Why submit your materials?**

If you have used materials in OER Commons, that is one part of the OER process; sharing back your own teaching and learning materials continues the cycle and enriches others’ experience of finding useful materials.

### **Examples of materials submitted to OER Commons**

The following links are just a small sample of the type of materials you can find in OER Commons:

[Introduction to Philosophy](#) (example of a course material submission)

This course is an introduction to philosophy for university students meeting the first of their philosophy course requirements. The course is intended to introduce philosophical questions, to shed light on how some of history's greatest philosophers have approached those questions, to help learners articulate philosophical concerns of their own and, most importantly, to learn how to address them. Among the areas of philosophy explored include ethics, political philosophy, metaphysics, and theory of knowledge.

[California Cultures](#) (example of a library collection submission)

This library collection documents California's rich history of diversity and multicultural contributions. The collection is from the University of California’s Calisphere collection and includes photographs, documents,

newspaper clippings, political cartoons, works of art, oral histories, and other primary sources draws from Calisphere's total content, and also features more than 20,000 specially digitized primary sources from special contributors.

[Conferences and Workshops](#) (example of one type of a OER Matters submission)

Conferences and Workshops is one example of an OER Matters topic. Other topics can be browsed from the [OER Matters](#) page. On the left side navigation, click on the topic you would like to browse (e.g., news, articles and reports, etc.)

By either conducting a quick search at OER Commons or browsing through the various OER collections, you will see that there is a large variety of teaching and learning materials available.

## **OER stories from around the world**

[Two Kenyan teachers](#) collaborate and share their materials at OER Commons.

Your experience using open and freely shared course-related materials is valuable in the reuse and evolution of the materials. [Tell us your story](#); how you've used these materials and how their use has impacted how you teach or learn.

## **Submit your course-related materials**

There are several examples of course-related materials listed on the [OER Categories page](#). Visit this page for ideas of the types of materials you can share with the OER Commons community. When you are ready to submit your own materials, here's how to do it:

1. Go to [OER Commons](#). You must be logged in to do this activity.

2. Click on the OER Matters link on the top of the page.
3. Click on the link Submit your Course Materials.

You can also click this link “[Submit Course-Related Materials](#)” to directly access this form.

Before submitting materials, you are asked to read, understand, and agree to the OER Commons [Conditions of Use](#). In the module “[OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#),” we talk in depth about how licensing works in OER Commons.

A small red box next to a field name indicates that it is mandatory field to complete. These mandatory fields must be completed for a successful submission. The information you provide in these fields gives descriptive information about the item you are submitting. This information is used to support the identification, description, and location of the item. It also provides the needed information for others to find your materials when using the search engine.

Most of the fields on the submission form are self-explanatory; e.g., title, author, abstract, etc. I’ll explain the fields that I anticipate where you might have questions.

**URL Pointer:** Provide the web address where your materials are stored. **OER Commons does not store your materials.** The URL you provide gives the direct link to where the materials are located.

**New keywords:** These are **tags** you create. Tags are author-created keywords. For more on tags, see the “[Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)” module. You can either create a new keyword (tag) or one that is provided using the existing keyword list.

**Parent materials:** The term **parent** refers to materials that are not your own. If the work you are submitting was modified from preexisting/parent materials, (e.g., you answered yes), then complete the following 2 fields “Parent Title” and “Parent URL.” Before including these materials, make sure their license allows the use/reuse of them. [Read more](#) about licensing.

**Parent URL:** Enter the URL where the preexisting materials exist.

**Conditions of Use:** Because the foundation of OER lies in the ability to freely use and reuse content, setting the conditions of use is extremely important in the OER process. The module “[OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#),” provides further information.

This section of the submission form offers 3 licenses to choose from:

1. Creative Commons
2. GNU Free Document
3. Custom/Other

Each type of license brings with it different legal restrictions and terms of use. You must be the copyright holder to license an original work. When creating derivative or modified works, you must abide by the restrictions of the license of the original work. The main intention for OER is to make materials usable for education and to provide alternatives to the restrictions of "All Rights Reserved". In addition, content released to the Public Domain can be used, shared, and modified without restrictions.

[Creative Commons](#) (CC) licenses enable copyright holders to grant some or all of their rights to the public by choosing among four differing licensing options, that in different combinations, produce [six licenses](#). The four options are named: Attribution, Share Alike, NonCommercial, and NoDerivatives. The licenses are being localized so that they may be applied on a per-country basis. The main intention is to allow creators of works to be able to set the terms of use themselves, without needing an attorney, and to avoid problems that copyright laws create around sharing and modifying works.

CC licenses provide a technical solution using RDF/XML metadata that describes the license and the work, making it easier to automatically process and locate licensed works. CC supplies the code on their web site for a licensor to add to their work.

In OER Commons, the most current version of the CC license is the top-level choice. To choose this option, click the radio button next to “Creative

Commons Licenses 3.0.” Next, click the link “Choose” under the CC license option. You will be walked through a series of questions to help you determine the type of CC license you want to use.

You can choose other CC licenses besides the most current one. By clicking the + icon next to “show/hide other Creative Commons licenses,” an expanded list is opened for you to choose the one you want. Read more about [Creative Commons licensing](#).

[GNU Free Document license](#) is another way to license your work for others to use. The GNU Free Documentation License (GNU FDL or simply GFDL) has been designed by the [Free Software Foundation](#) (FSF). The GFDL was intended for manuals, textbooks, other reference and instructional materials, and documentation for GNU and open source software. However, it can be used for any text-based work of any subject matter. For example, Wikipedia uses the GFDL for all of its text.

The GFDL license grants rights to readers and users of materials to copy, share, redistribute and modify a work. It requires all copies and derivatives to be available under the same license. Copies may also be sold commercially. There are specific requirements for modifying works involving crediting the creator of the work and for distributing large numbers of copies.

**Custom/Other:** Custom License is used to describe the terms granted and restrictions imposed by the copyright holder for a work covered by copyright in order to provide a clear alternative to “All Rights Reserved.” It simply allows the creator of a work to state conditions for which educators and learners may view, use, share, re-distribute, or modify a work. Allowing “use for educational purposes only,” for example, grants a reader or user of a work the opportunity to use it in a classroom or for personal learning or research purposes without needing to ask permission or pay a fee. Permission to alter a work may be prohibited or not, and the conditions may be specifically described. Commercial use may also be prohibited and can specifically be stated as such.

## **Non-compatibility of Licenses**



The differing requirements and restrictions of Creative Commons (CC), GNU Free Documentation License (GFDL) and Custom-licensed or Copyrighted (All Rights Reserved) materials, make these licenses incompatible with each other. Combining content across license type is still a legal and technical obstacle for creating thoroughly remixable content.

More may be learned on this subject at the entry for “[Free Content](#)” in Wikipedia, where you can find many links on the legal and philosophical distinctions around licensing content.

### **Final Step in Submitting Material in OER Commons**

After identifying the license/copyright holder’s name, by clicking the “Save” button, your submission is sent to the OER Commons Team.

To learn more about OER Conditions of Use, please refer to the module “[OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#).”

### **Submit library or collection**

Items in the OER Commons [Libraries and Collections](#) are resources from digital media collections and libraries of digitized primary sources. These resources are from primary sources, special collections of pedagogical materials, and other tools, texts, and reference-based web sites that are useful for teaching and learning.

Here are two examples from Libraries and Collections:

- [Making Decisions](#) (from the OpenLearn/Open University collection).
- [Case Studies in Terrorism Response](#) (from the JHSPH OpenCourseWare collection).

The “[Submit Library or Collection](#)” form is similar to the one for submitting course-related materials. The only difference is you are not asked whether the work was modified from preexisting/parent materials.

Follow the instructions in the section “Submit your course-related materials.”

## **Submit OER Matters content**

The types of items collected in [OER Matters](#) are items such as: news, articles, reports, new tools, technologies, wiki spaces, blog posts, upcoming conferences, and discussions from other sites around the web. To see examples of OER Matters items, go to the [OER Matters](#) page and click on each topic name to browse items by topics.

By submitting the above-mentioned types of items to OER Matters, you can promote the work you are involved in, such as wiki, blogs, or conferences to the OER Commons community.

Just like the other submission forms, many of the questions on the “[Submit OER Matters Content](#)” form are self-explanatory. I’ll explain the fields where I anticipate you might have questions. This form differs from the others—there is more than one page. By clicking the “Next” button as you complete each page, you will be given the opportunity to rate, comment, create tags, and notes for this material.

**Content Types:** There are seven OER Matters content types:

1. News Stories
2. Articles and Reports
3. Tools and Technology
4. Organizations and Associations
5. Conferences and Workshops
6. Discussion Forums
7. Blogs and Wikis

You can choose more than one content type. For example, if your content is a news story and is on a blog or wiki, choose both by clicking in the selection box next to each content type.

**Content Topics:** There are nine OER Matters content topics. They are listed below with a short description:

1. How and Why of OER: The challenges and potential impact of OER.
2. Teaching and Learning: The impact of OER for educators and learners.
3. Localization: The process through which educational resources are adapted to meet local teaching and learning needs.
4. Standards/Certifications: The alignment of curriculum standards to OER.
5. Intellectual Property: Legal issues surrounding the sharing, use, and re-use of OER.
6. Open Source: A movement, its activities, and concepts associated with the collaborative creation of freely available software source code.
7. Technology: The latest innovations in and roles of OER-related technologies.
8. Research: Models, methodologies, paradigms, and theories in the OER research community.
9. Policy: Infrastructure, funding, stakeholders, accessibility, and other support mechanisms that sustain and grow OER.

Just like content type, you can choose more than one topic.

**Content Creation Date:** There are drop down menus to choose (in this order from left to right) year, month, day, hour, minute.

After completing the rest of this form, click the “Next” button. This takes you to a form to rate the material you are submitting. All of your information is automatically saved when you click “Next.”

There is a succession of pages with short forms; you reach each next page by clicking the “Next” button. On each “next” page you can add comments, keywords and/or tags, and notes. Click the “Save” button to submit your OER Matters content.

**Recommend new OER**

Complete the [Recommend New OER form](#) if you would like to recommend either Course-Related or Libraries and Collections OER. Using this form helps the OER Commons team become aware of more OER providers and materials to include in OER Commons. This in turn helps educators and learners connect with even more teaching and learning material.

## **OER Commons submission policy**

The OER Commons Team reviews data contributed through the use of the forms mentioned above, but does not guarantee the accuracy of data submitted to us by others. Our policy requires that users submit only material that they own, have permission to use, and properly attribute. Consistent with this policy, we would remove items from our database found to be in violation of the rights and conditions of use for those materials.

## **Activity: Submitting OER material**

Choose materials to submit to OER Commons. Click on the appropriate link and submit your materials using the submission form:

1. [Submit your Course Materials](#)
2. [Submit Your Library or Collection](#)
3. [Submit OER Matters](#)
4. [Recommend new OER materials](#)

## **Activity: Share Your Experience**

In the OER Commons discussion “[How and Why of OER](#),” post your stories, suggestions, and questions with using OER in your teaching and learning. Here are a few questions to consider in your post:

1. What do you feel are the benefits of sharing OER?
2. What issues have you encountered in sharing OER?
3. How has sharing OER changed the way you work?

4. If you have not shared your own materials, what keeps you from sharing?

## For More Information

The following resources have been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

- OER Commons Matters: <http://www.oercommons.org/matters>
- OER Commons Conditions of Use: <http://www.oercommons.org/help/learn-more-about/conditions-of-use>

## Other modules in this course include ...

- [Why OER?](#)
- [Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#)
- [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)
- [My OER Portfolio](#)
- [OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#)
- [What is Localization?](#)
- [Students and OER](#)
- [What are Open Textbooks?](#)
- OER Case Study
- [Glossary](#)

This module showed how to submit your own content items or links to items about the field of open education to OER Commons. The next module, “[OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#),” will give an overview of the licensing and conditions of use in OER Commons as well as a general overview of licensing for OER.

## OER Commons Links

For more information about OER Commons, send an email to [info@oercommons.org](mailto:info@oercommons.org).

Use [this feedback form](#) to send OER Commons general feedback, a feature request, or information about a bug/problem you had using the site.

To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

## “Quotable Quote”

People with shared interests have organized around shared documents, while in turn such documents have helped develop new interests. [\[footnote\]](#)  
Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (2002). *The social life of information*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

## About This Module

**The "How Tos" of OER Commons** is a set of learning modules evolving out of the development of OER Commons (<http://www.oercommons.org>), a teaching and learning network for free-to-use educational materials from around the world, created and licensed by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.

## Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now

If you completed the module “[Why OER?](#),” you should now have an OER Commons account. Perhaps you also posted and read discussions in the forum [How and Why of OER](#).

The objective of this module is to show the many ways you can quickly and easily find materials in OER Commons. One of the early challenges in locating high-quality teaching and learning materials was the time it took to search a variety of sites. OER Commons solved that problem by providing a single point of access through which educators, students, and all learners can search, browse, evaluate, download, and discuss OER that are freely available online.

This module, “Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now,” is activity-based. Let’s jump into the collection of materials and find something you can start using in your teaching and learning.

### Finding Materials

If you haven’t logged in already, [login](#) to OER Commons. The advantage to logging in is that you can save your search for future use and re-use.

To locate materials in OER Commons you can search or browse. There are two ways to search and four ways to browse.

### Searching

You can do a [simple keyword search](#) using the search box located in the upper right corner of every page.

The second way to search is to use the [advanced search](#), which provides a wide variety of options for refining your search. In the “Find results by Keyword” box, search for an item using a keyword and refine your search using any combination of over 70 filtering criteria.

Searches can be saved by clicking the “Save This Search” button located on every search results page. Saved searches are placed in your portfolio. We’ll be talking more about your [OER Portfolio](#) in another module.

### Too many results?

If you want to narrow the number of items listed on your search results page, you can filter the results. Using one or more of the 70 filtering criteria, you can narrow your search to find exactly what you are looking for. The “Filter Results” button is located on every search results page.

### Want more results?

Try a different keyword or use one of the following methods to get a different results listing of OER materials.

## Browsing

The predefined classifications in OER Commons provide an easy entry into browsing through OER materials.

**Browsing the OER Top Ten:** located in the middle of the OER Commons homepage. There are four categories: Featured, Most Popular, Highest Rated, and New. These are updated regularly, so visit the OER Top Ten often!

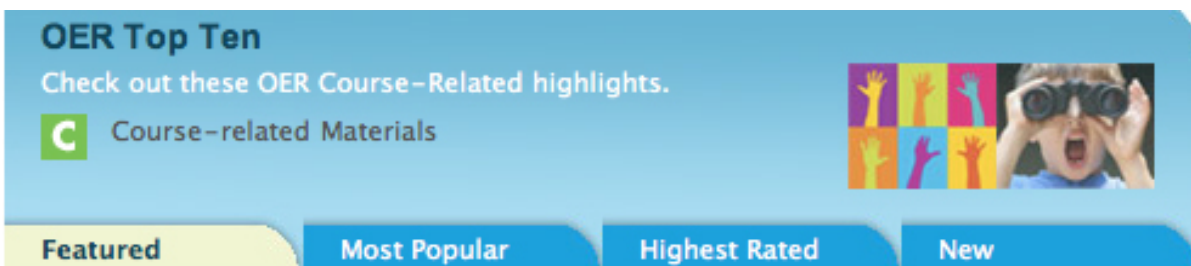




Figure 1. Visual representation of “OER Top Ten.”

**Browsing by Subject Area or Grade Level:** located on the left side of the OER Commons homepage under the heading “Choose OER By.” Click on one of the subject areas or grade levels to begin browsing.

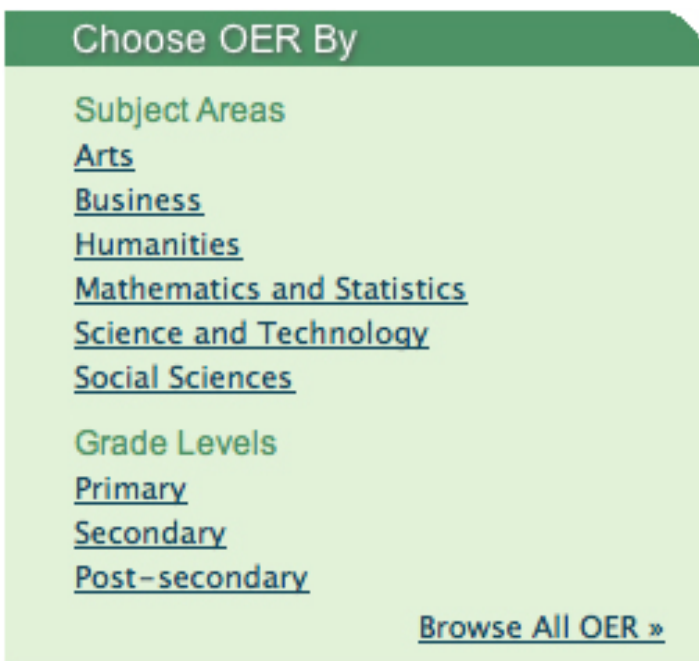


Figure 2. Visual representation of “Choose OER By.”

**Browsing by Course-Related Materials or Libraries and Collections:** located in [OER Teaching and Learning Materials](#). You can also browse by subject areas as well as grade level.

Under the heading “Course-Related Materials,” there are three categories:

1. Full Course—to see all or part of a course
2. Learning Modules—to see a portion of a course
3. OpenCourseWare—to see all materials in MIT’s OCW Consortium.

At a glance, you can see how many items are in each category. The number in parentheses shows the quantity of OER items for that category. If, for

example, you don't have time to browse hundreds or thousands of OER items, filter your search after you click on the category.

If you are looking for a specific instructional component such as a simulation or a video lecture, course-related materials are also categorized by 16 different instructional components. Clicking on any one of these components will display a listing of all the items for that particular instructional component.

Under the heading “Libraries and Collections,” you will find digitized primary sources from a wide variety of digital media collections and libraries.

You can also browse each [individual content provider's](#) collection for either the Course-Related Materials or the Libraries and Collections.

### **Browsing by Tags**

Tags are keywords you associate with an OER item. Tags are a way for you to personalize/categorize OER items. OER Commons provides pre-set categories; tags are the way for you to create your own categories. [Read more on tags](#).

**Top 30 Tags:** located on the right side of the OER Commons homepage.

The results page lists other tags related to the one you chose.

**TagCloud:** located on the right side of the [OER Commons homepage](#). The “[TagCloud](#)” page lists all the tags in OER Commons.

The size of a word indicates its popularity.

### **Activity: Find Materials**

Using one or more of the searching or browsing methods, locate materials you can begin using in your teaching or learning. After finding an item you can use, save it by clicking the “Save Item” link located under the title. (See Figure 3.)

## Float a Boat



Figure 3. Visual representation of an OER item with the “Save Item” link.

When you save this item, it goes into your portfolio. We’ll be talking more about your [OER Portfolio](#) in another module.

### Activity: Share Your Experience

In the OER Commons discussion “[How and Why of OER](#),” post your stories, suggestions, and questions with using OER in your teaching and learning. Here are some questions to consider in your post:

1. What was a surprising find as you searched for materials?
2. What frustrations have you encountered while searching for materials?
3. What are your top three or four wishes in how an OER site should be designed?

### For More Information

The following resource has been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

- Help with searching OER Commons:  
<http://www.oercommons.org/help/help-with-searching>

### Other modules in this course include ...

- [Why OER?](#)
- [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)
- [My OER Portfolio](#)
- [Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)
- [OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#)

- [What is Localization?](#)
- [Students and OER](#)
- [What are Open Textbooks?](#)
- OER Case Study
- [Glossary](#)

This module showed how quickly you can find OER materials. The next module, “[Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#),” will show how you can start contributing to OER Commons by tagging, rating, and reviewing the materials you have used.

## OER Commons Links

For more information about OER Commons, send an email to [info@oercommons.org](mailto:info@oercommons.org).

Use [this feedback form](#) to send OER Commons general feedback, a feature request, or information about a bug/problem you had using the site.

To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

## “Quotable Quote”

When information is identified as meaningful, it is a force for change.  
[\[footnote\]](#)

Wheatley, M. J., (1999). *Leadership and the New Science*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

## About This Module

The "How Tos" of OER Commons is a set of learning modules evolving out of the development of OER Commons (<http://www.oercommons.org>), a teaching and learning network for free-to-use educational materials from

around the world, created and licensed by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.

## OER Development

### Lesson Components

- Fast Fact
- Skill/Objective
- Success Indicators
- Introduction
- Activity
- Review questions
- Resources

### Fast Fact

"[Universal design](#) is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. The intent of universal design is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at little or no extra cost. Universal design benefits people of all ages and abilities." - [Center for Universal Design](#)

### Skills/Objectives

Learners will be able to:

1. Use tools and resources to develop OER.
2. Identify the requirements for OER in order to comply with ADA Section 508 requirements.

### Success Indicators

1. OER developed by the learner added to learner's own online collection or portfolio.

## Background

As noted by [Todd Richmond](#) at a DIY Media seminar at the Annenberg Center in 2006, the [commons-based peer production](#) or do-it-yourself shared media production aspect of OER may well be a catalyst for innovation once OER goes [viral](#). Several resources are available on the Internet that provide teachers with tools to share and collaborate on the development of OER for use in instruction. Some of these are: Rice Connexions, Open Learning Content Observatory Services (OLCOS), WikiEducator, and WikiBooks.

## Accessibility

Certain accessibility requirements must be addressed when developing OER for electronic dissemination to students. By law, [ADA Section 508](#), learning materials, including interfaces, images, sounds, multimedia elements, and all other forms of information, must be made available for used by anyone, regardless of disability. Detailed information about accessibility guidelines are available at [Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\)](#) and the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#). [A-Prompt](#) is an accessibility evaluation and repair tool from the University of Toronto in cooperation with the Trace Center and CAST. A demonstration version is available for download. A-Prompt lists what it considers to be errors and offers a chance to correct each one. [Utah State University](#), [Web Accessibility in Mind \(Webaim\)](#), offers various "How To" information and support on creating accessible web sites. Web authors can find a Section checklist, sample HTML markup and various articles and courses on accessible web design. [The Accessible Web Publishing Wizard](#) simplifies the task of converting PowerPoint presentations, Word documents, and (in the future) Excel spreadsheets to accessible HTML through an easy-to-use user interface and automation of many of the details of conversion.

## Rice Connexions

Take a [tour of Connexions](#). Connexions was started at Rice University in 1999 to promote innovative ways to write, edit, publish, and use textbooks and other learning materials. Connexion participants are encouraged to:

- Create educational materials and [contribute them to the repository](#).
- Rip or copy the material and customize it
- Mix the material together into new books and courses
- Burn or create finished products such as e-learning web courses, CDroms, and even printed books

Open-access software tools and free-use materials are available via the [Creative Commons Attribution license](#) to facilitate collaboration and sharing. At Connexions, instructors can easily [collaborate](#) on OER development in a variety of roles including coauthors, maintainers, workgroup members, suggesters, and users of derived copies. Instructors can update their OER course material and make it available for distribution quickly.

### **OWL Institute**

In addition to providing users with connections to OER resources and communities, the [OWL Institute Portal](#) provides the opportunity for users to develop and share their own OER resources. Contact the Owl Institute to receive "creator" or "teacher" access to courses and pages.

### **Digital Universe**

The [Digital Universe](#) seeks [stewards and voluntary consultants to assist](#) in their efforts "to organize the sum total of human knowledge and make it available to everyone."

### **Le Mill**

[Tour Le Mill](#) to find a variety of open learning materials. Join the Learning Mill community to contribute and share your own learning materials. [FAQs](#) describe how to use the site.

### **More Tools**

OLCOS, the UK's [Open Learning Content Observatory Services](#) project contains a 30 minute tutorial about how to [produce OER](#). This tutorial provides information and practical tasks in creating and modifying open content in open process as well as formats that can be published as open educational resources and tools, that support this process. [Wikieducator](#) promotes collaborative authoring and use of OER by providing tools using wiki technologies such as [eXe](#). The Wikieducator [Content Development](#)



[Project](#) is an opportunity for educators to contribute and share their OER. Wikibooks [Wikibooks](#) is a [Wikimedia](#) project that started in 2003 with the goal to create a free collection of open-content textbooks that anyone can edit. Since its inception, volunteers have written over 25,000 modules in a multitude of textbooks. If you're an instructor planning on using Wikibooks for a class project, read [guidelines for class projects](#). Take a [tour](#) of the [Instructional Architect](#), a service of the National Science Digital Library, to find out how you can use it to find discipline-specific OER, organize and modify those resources into activities for your students, and make those new activities available to a variety of audiences. [ccMixter](#) is a community music site provide opportunities to collaborate with others to re-purpose and mix existing learning materials licensed under Creative Commons. [Send2Wiki](#) is a new tool that lets users easily send a copy of a webpage to a wiki for remixing. [Wikia](#) are provides free wiki hosting designed expressly for promoting reuse of open content with the MediaWiki software. All content on Wikia is perpetually licensed under the GNU Free Documentation License.

## **Activity**

## **Experience**

## **Creative Commons**

Use [Creative Commons](#) to search for learning materials that you are free to use, remix, repurpose, etc.

## **Wikieducator**

Watch a short video about how to create an account at [Wikieducator](#). Register for your account.

## **OER Commons**

1. Join OER Commons. Go to the [OER Commons](#) website, then click on Join Now.
2. Click on Start My OER Portfolio.

3. Visit [Shared Portfolios](#) posted to the OER Commons website to see to see how others search, use, and interact with OER.

## **Reflect**

Post to your course Discussion area in response to the following questions:

1. What is the best way to promote development of OER among educators?
2. Who should be responsible for ensuring that OER are developed with ADA Section 508 accessibility requirements in mind?

## **Apply**

### **MERLOT**

1. View the [Gallery of Sample MERLOT From the Author Snapshots](#)
2. Go to the MERLOT website.
3. View a few Personal Collections posted by others.
4. Become a member of [MERLOT](#).
5. Create your own MERLOT [Personal Collection](#).

### **Wikibooks**

1. Create an account at [Wikibooks](#).
2. Go to [Wikibooks Sandbox](#) to create a wiki.

### **Connexions**

[Create a module](#) to share at [Connexions](#).

- After registering, review the [New Author Guide](#).
- You can import a Word document or use the Connexions Edit-in-Place tool to create your module.

## **Review Questions**

1. What are some of the resources you can use to remix, repurpose OER, and develop your own OER?
2. What is necessary to ensure compliance with ADA Section 508 accessibility laws when developing OER for electronic dissemination to student?

## Resources

- [Collaborative Development of Open Content](#)
- [WikiEducator: Memoirs, Myths, Misrepresentations and the Magic](#)
- [OER Development and Publishing Initiatives](#)
- [Open Educational Resources – Anonymity vs. Specificity](#)
- [Advancing Sustainability of Open Educational Resources](#)